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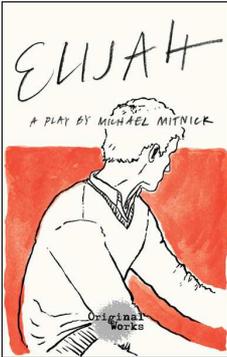
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Babs the Dodo
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PAST/FUTURE/PRESENT

A TRILOGY

by Michael Mitnick



I. PAST - ELIJAH

4M/5W

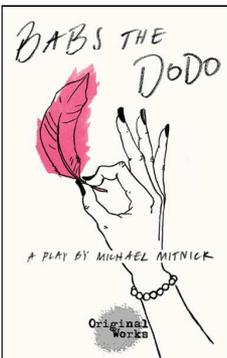
1922: Elijah, a broke student from Brooklyn, arrives in Paris and becomes an accidental Don Juan overnight. While hunting his idol, a reclusive composer of ballets, Elijah is swept into a life changing summer of sex, opium, and blackmail.



II. FUTURE - ED, DOWNLOADED

1M/2W

Set in a future where one can purchase immortality and spend an afterlife in a digital heaven of one's favorite memories, technological advancements bring infinite possibilities. Half live action play and half film, *Ed, Downloaded* is a sci-fi love story for high-tech dreamers.



III. PRESENT - BABS THE DODO

2M/2W

Despite a heart of 14k gold, Babs is over-the-hill and facing extinction as a top On-Air personality at the Home Shopping Network. Love appears from unexpected places as Babs fights to survive. This deliriously dark comedy sets Babs in the sale of her life as she grasps for love, happiness and sparkle.

babs
the
dodo

a sad comedy by
michael mitnick

SAMPLE ONLY

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INTRODUCTION

A number of years ago I was workshopping a new musical at Northwestern University. Things were not, as they say, going well.

As it happened, also on campus at the time was legendary King of Comedy in All its Forms, Larry Gelbart. My collaborators and I asked Larry if he would do us the favor of coming to see the show. He did, we met for drinks afterwards, and we asked him what he thought. He paused. What I remember as a wistful, melancholy pause. Then he said, “Fellas, funny doesn’t hurt.”

Funny doesn’t hurt.

No, it most certainly doesn’t. In most cases, of course, the writer’s goal is not to be funny merely for the sake of being funny. Although as anyone who’s seen *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* will tell you, funny merely for the sake of being funny definitely has its place.

No. As demonstrated by the play you are about to read, funny in the right hands is a means to an end. Funny is an artist’s tool. A skillful way of connecting to an audience, of delivering to that audience something, inside the laughter, of real consequence. Something, in the case of *babs the dodo*, sweet, insightful and deeply human.

One final thought. Plays are meant to be experienced live, in a theater, not on a printed page. That said, one of the unexpected pleasures of reading this particular play as opposed to seeing it, are the stage directions. They are a bonus. Michael Mitnick’s voice—witty, compassionate, and humane—leading us through *babs the dodo* not unlike the Stage Manager leading us through *Our Town*.

Enjoy.

John Weidman

New York City

babs the dodo was first performed at the Yale Cabaret in New Haven, CT February 26-28 in 2009. The cast and crew were as follows:

Directed by Michael Mitnick
Associate Producer – Kim Rosenstock
Dramaturg – Jacob Gallagher-Ross
Scenic Designer – Jung Griffin
Lighting Designer – Adrian Rooney
Costume Designer – Lisa Loen
Sound Designer – Katie Buechner
Video Designer – Sarah Lasley
Dodo Designer – Lisa Loen & Susan
Ornithology Consultant – J. Hall Chapman
Technical Director – Brian Dambacher
Stage Manager – Allison Johnson

Babs Gillespie – Liz Wisan
Raymond The Birdwatcher – Marcus Henderson
Jocelyn Knob – Brenna Palughi
Handsome Chris Cullin – Zach Appelman

babs the dodo received its official world premiere at Washington Ensemble Theatre Company in Seattle, Washington. It ran February 3-March 14, 2010.

Directed by Elise Hunt

Set Design – Jessica Trudy

Stage Manager – Ashton Hymen

Properties Designer – Kirk Damer

Sound Design – Robertson Witmer

Costume Designer – Katie Hegarty

Babs – Marty Mukhalian

Raymond – Charles Norris

Jocelyn Knob – Hannah Victoria Franklin

Handsome Chris Cullin – John Abramson

CHARACTERS

BABS GILLESPIE, 50

HANDSOME CHRIS CULLIN, 52

RAYMOND THE BIRDWATCHER, 28

JOCELYN NOB, 33

VOICE OF MARY JO

TIME AND PLACE

There's no time like the present.

Locations around Eastern Pennsylvania.

A NOTE ON SELLING

The actors playing BABS, CHRIS, & JOCELYN should each drink a bottle of wine and watch the HSN or QVC for research. It won't be research. It will be the best time they've ever had in their entire lives. RAYMOND can come too, if he feels left out.

Among other frightening things, they will discover that they, The Actors, need to really *go for it*. They must fall in passionate, disgusting love with the Product. Don't show a sliver of doubt- - it could mean the difference between a Sale and a Channel Change.

A NOTE ON SALES (Δ)

Every time BABS or CHRIS make a sale (and later RAYMOND), a tone sounds. This tone should not be annoying – it should be the sound of gratification mixed with holiness. Something like the sound that is produced when two angels accidentally bump halos.

Feel free to pepper these tones throughout the selling monologues. [And some suggested key placements of tones are denoted by: Δ]

“This quotation has nothing to do with the play.”

– Michael Mitnick

Prague, 1931

SAMPLE ONLY

Babs the Dodo

SCENE 1

(Hello everyone. Look around and take it all in. We are in Eastern Pennsylvania. We're in a middle-class living room. We are where everything is cream-toned and spot-less. The lighting is basically fabulous. But look – the walls of the creamy living room run out at the edges. Wait a moment -- this living room isn't a living room at all! No, Faithful Watcher, we are not in a living room -- we are on set; and we are On-The-Air!)

(Our host, thank goodness, is the incomparable BABS GILLESPIE. She has short dark hair with a stunning wave of white, like Pepè Le Pew, but Ms. Gillespie does not smell of skunk – she smells of total refinement. The smell cost \$68.99 (a steal) and comes in a heart-shaped, genuine glass bottle. Ms. Gillespie wears a shiny turquoise blouse (A \$39.00 Special) that gives us an ample glimpse of her substantial and sun-spotted bosoms. Does she have necklaces and bracelets and rings and dangly pretty metals from her lobes? You bet she does! They jingle and jangle and make Ms. Gillespie sparkle like the gem she is. They don't clack too loudly though – for Ms. Gillespie is mic-ed. Her teeth are white, her face is friendly, but her voice is assertive. She is our deeply opinionated friend. Millions of people worship Ms. Gillespie. She is our lord

from three to five-thirty postmeridian. She tells it like it is, or really, as it should be. She is all we have left.)

(And that is fine by us, because we are all she has left, too.)

((PS – It is her 50th birthday tomorrow. If you see her, congratulate her. She’s the kind of person who isn’t ashamed of her age, but likes to pretend she is to get some fun and playful sympathy.))

(Babs Gesturing to a pin on her blouse.)

BABS: *(Enormous Gasp.)* **Look** at this. **Look** at **THIS ONE**. Oh, isn’t this nice, ladies? Look at this. 14 karat. Can you zoom in there, Gary? Get real close in here. That’s good. Now **look at this one**. **LOOK!** Aw! **I LOVE IT**. 14 karat. Michael St. Matthews Collection. This is top of the line, ladies. Michael St. Matthews – oh – an Anywhere Dazzler this is. Look at **THIS**. Mark me down. Δ Put me down, all right. I’m gonna get this right now: “Guardian Angel Pendant.” Openwork. Rhodium-plated angel in the middle there. Rhodium. That’s a rare metal, I think. Like platinum. Just like platinum white gold whathaveyou. Δ This is Rhodium plated, 360 ways around. Guardian Angel. Look at that engraving: *My Guardian Angel is My Protector*. Oh - now don’t you love that? You put this on and your husband’ll come home while you’re stir-

ring the spaghetti and he'll say, "You know, Babs, there's something different about you. You look... *safer.*"

Now see this. See *that. That.* I'm holding my thumb next to it. It goes to the base of the thumb. Past the knuckle, ladies. It's got heft but won't tear the blouse. 14 Karat. **To the base of the thumb.** Δ Where's the ruler? Where's the – Darlene, where's my – oh. Here we go. Look at this. You see that – This is a substantial piece of jewelry. If you love me, Don, I need you to *BUY IT.* Δ

Let's have a heart-to-heart, Ladies. Just you and Babs Gillespie. Send the milkman out of the room. Is he gone? Is he gone? Good.

Are you missing a little something in your lives? Δ Δ Δ A little spark and sparkle? Want your man to notice you more? Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Δ Haha. Seems ya do! Well, this is it. Right here. Put this on and he'll say, "Wow and gee – now look at *you.*" Δ

Let's take a call – we've got Mary Jo from Rapid City. **Mary Jo!!** You're @ *Home with Babs Gillespie.*

(Ridiculous, expectant grin.)

Mary Jo? Mary Jooooo. I think we lost her. Well,
let's just

VOICE OF MARY JO: Hello?

BABS: Mary Jo! I thought we lost ya!

VOICE OF MARY JO: Am I on TV?

BABS: Absadoodle. Mary Jo. Whaddaya think of this
pin?

VOICE OF MARY JO: I love it Babs.

BABS: Mary Jo, do you go to church? It's the perfect
place to wear it – think of what your girlfriends will be
saying. I know sometimes I have my church clothes
on, maybe a little cute jacket, but it's plain, Mary Jo.
Am I right? Am I right? No, I'm asking you, Mary Jo.
Am I right?

VOICE OF MARY JO: Right!

BABS: It's a little plain. So you spice it up with this.
Holds it together. Focuses the eye. Right **here. HERE.**
△ But then your girlfriends'll look up and what do
they see: **YOU.** △ △ △ They see *you* and your good
judgment and smiling pretty face there.

VOICE OF MARY JO: Don't put that in your mouth,
Damian! Take that out of your mouth right now,
Damian! Sorry Babs.

BABS: Oh, you have a little baby!

VOICE OF MARY JO: Yes. Damian.

BABS: I wanted a Baby so bad, and I got one. And his
name is Don! Just kidding, Don. I love ya – But Buy
Me This Pin! Haha. Thanks for talking with us, Mary
Jo.

VOICE OF MARY JO: Thanks, Babs. We love you so
much in Rapid City. And I just wanted to say that –

BABS: Oopsie. I guess we lost her. I love you too with
all my heart, Mary Jo and little Baby Damy too! La-
dies, I'm turning fifty tomorrow. Babs Gillespie has
walked this earth for fifty years. Δ Or, I guess I'm en-
tering my fifty-first year tomorrow, but I crawled for
the first year, so I've walked it for fifty years and you
know what I'm asking Don for. Say it out loud, I can
hear ya.... "*Guardian Angel Pendant.*" Δ Δ Δ Uh oh–
I'm out of time! This is it! Tear drop design. Base of
the thumb. 14K. You get the gift box. Δ You get the
protection of knowing there's something watching
over you, something fashionable and religious pinned
to your chest, over your heart like a shield, like a

knight-in-shining-Rhodium-armor keeping the evil away and making you feel loved and look downright fabulous. Δ Δ Δ Δ **We're out of time;** *we've got Handsome Chris up next with the Cedar Hot Tub.*

Stay with us. Δ

SAMPLE ONLY

SCENE 2

(Look at BABS. She's sitting in a folding chair next to the craft services table. She's holding her head in her hands. As CHRIS's VOICE speaks, she begins silently crying. This goes on for the duration of scene two of this play, BABS THE DODO.)

Note: This scene is LOADED with tones (Δ). CHRIS REALLY outsells poor BABS. Put them everywhere, like gunfire. Like Angel gunfire.

CHRIS'S VOICE: Bubbles, bubbles, bubbles! Thirty-six jets. We'll hit your lower back, your thighs and feet. We'll hit your upper back. We'll hit your total neck area. How much do you pay a month on massages? How much do you or other people pay a chiropractor? A specialist of muscles? Physical therapy. Thousands. *Hundreds*. Save money. Relax. Kick back after a hard day, pop open a root brew, and soak away the troubles. You've earned it. Three-thousand-five-hundred, marked down from Four. Where does the water touch you? On your lower back, on your thighs, the whole leg region. We're talking your upperback, your blades. **YOUR ARMS. My GOD. Your ARMS!** Don't get me started. I spend all day on my feet here talking with you, holding things in the air, waving them in your face. The arm gets tired. The arm deserves what the tushy usually gets. A break. The dimensions are ...

OK, they're telling me they're getting the measurements. No problem. We've got Pauline running around back there. Can we get a shot of that? Can we – this is hilarious, folks. I've never seen her move so fast – can we get a shot of that? Can we – We can? Can we get a shot of – OK I guess we can't, but take my word for it. Pauline is **MOVIN!** Think about how good your abdomen will feel. Thirty-six jets, extra performance propulsion jets. Hitting all the trouble areas, washing all those troubles away. Dip in your feet for a little wake-up or soak up to your neck if you want the total experience. You deserve it. A big outdoor tub of water for you to enjoy. A big outdoor gigantic bucket of warm water. Drown in it. Can we get a shot of Pauline? NO?

(Pause.)

You're protected.

SCENE 3

(It's date time for BABS. She's dressed up in a tasteful ensemble – stylish, tailored, flattering. We think she looks quite nice. We wonder where she bought it. BABS sits at a small table set for fine dining opposite RAYMOND, a handsome but chubby-on-the-verge-of-fat twenty-eight-year-old black man. RAYMOND is bookish and wears a cool suit plus a purple bowtie. BABS is nervous! She's like a different person when she's not under those hot studio lights! BABS and RAYMOND are both reading their menus. After a moment...)

BABS: Sorry it took so long for me to recognize you.

RAYMOND: Don't be silly.

BABS: I didn't expect – I didn't know what you looked like.

RAYMOND: Oh it's fine, just fine.

BABS: Because your picture was a penguin.

(More reading.)

RAYMOND: It's all seafood here. I wonder if they have Mermaid on the menu.

(He winks at her. She misses it.)

BABS: I don't think that Mermaids are a real thing oh my god you're joking.

(More reading.)

RAYMOND: Mmmmm. If I can't decide, I guess I'll have to order everything. Good thing I brought my big stomach tonight. *(A beat. Then, BABS lets out her loud laugh – she got his joke this time.)* There ya go. You've got a great sense of humor. You recognize good humor.

BABS: Thanks...oh dear. I forgot your name. I know you told it to me over by the Bonsai Tree but– I don't suppose you want me to call you Anatinus577.

RAYMOND: It's Raymond. Call me Ray.

BABS: Like Ray Charles. Oh dear. I didn't mean...oh no. I didn't mean because you're. You know. *(Whispered stuttering as she edits herself. Oh BABS.)* Black-fri-can American. *(Normal voiced)* Oh I'm such an idiot. It's because I'm nervous. I haven't been out on one of these since... I could have said like Ray from *Everybody Loves Ray* but I had to say...

RAYMOND: It's quite all right.

BABS: ...I haven't been on one of these since I don't know. Jules Who Does My Hair suggested I try DateSpot, that's where she met, meets, well, *lots of guys* it sounds like, and so I signed up and you were the first one to respond.

RAYMOND: Oh.

BABS: I mean. I like you. I'm glad you responded. I'd want to be here with you even if a thousand people responded. Which they wouldn't, of course. But I'm glad you're here. With me. You're really funny and really... Really... *(He waits for a response. None comes. They both resume reading their menus.)* Hey, if I knew you liked birds so much, we should have skipped the seafood and just gotten some bird food!

(RAYMOND doesn't laugh.)

Oh I'm sorry. I guess bird food is seeds. Birdseed. That doesn't really make sense, does it? Who wants to eat a bowl of birdseed? Nobody. I'm not good with jokes. And I guess you wouldn't want to eat birds because you love them.

RAYMOND: I eat poultry. I also study it.

BABS: Huh.

(Back to the menus. RAYMOND looks up.)

RAYMOND: Have I seen you somewhere before?

BABS: (*Blushing*) I don't think so.

RAYMOND: You look – I feel like you're in a Burger King commercial.

BABS: Burger King? No. I'm not on a...

RAYMOND: No. I'm pretty sure. I feel like I've seen you somewhere...

(BABS is holding out...till finally.)

BABS: OK. You wanna know? And up next what do we have. Ah. A fine men's suit. (*Gestures to RAYMOND's suit.*) This is Italian cloth, with a subtle her-ringbone. Lightweight, so you won't be sweatin' in this one, folks. It's a two-button...um...very fashion-able. It's often worn by very *handsome* men. Get yours today. Right away!

RAYMOND: The Taco Bell commercial!

BABS: No!

RAYMOND: I'm joking. You're on the ShopMore Channel. I know who you are! You're Babs Gillespie! I watch you at three AM when I can't sleep.

BABS: It's replayed. I'm usually on from 3-5:30 in the afternoon which is the prime time of shopping channels. I'm not bragging. I'm just saying facts.

RAYMOND: Yeah here's a fact: You're a really sexy lady.

BABS: What? You really think so?

RAYMOND: Yes I do, Barbara. Yes I sure do.

BABS: *(She has never been happier.)* You're so sweet to say that. My. And I think you're so handsome.

(They share a moment.)

RAYMOND: I'm gonna order us some champagne. For your birthday.

BABS: AHHHH!!!! OH MY GOD!!!!!! How'd you know?

RAYMOND: You put it down on your profile. I noticed.

BABS: You noticed. And here I thought the only sensitive men were gay.

RAYMOND: How old are you today? They block the year on DateSpot.

BABS: I'm...well...URG! OK. I'll *SAY IT*. I'm **fifty!**
AH!!! FIFTY!!! AH!!!!!!

RAYMOND: Terrific! Happy Birthday!

BABS: (*Scared*) How old are you?

RAYMOND: Twenty-eight.

BABS: Oh no...Well that won't...oh my, no, no, no,
no...

RAYMOND: You're one sexy fifty-year-old Barbara.

BABS: Really? (*He nods.*) Thank you, Raymond.

(*They gaze at each other for a moment, then return to their menus. BABS is beaming.*)

RAYMOND: Well all right...

SCENE 4

(JOCELYN NOB is a jerk. In this scene, she is yelling at BABS, whom we love because she has a heart of 14K gold and sells us the objects we covet. We also hear thumping noises.)

JOCELYN: Look. This is the worst part of my job. Believe me, Babs, I take no pleasure in doing this. None. Zero. None. When I have to. When I have to. I'm sorry. I feel like I'm about to. I feel like I'm about to sneeze. We've got men crawling through the ventilation. Oh I hate this feeling. It's like, "COME ON ALREADY! IF A SNEEZE IS IN MY NOSE THEN FALL OUT ALREADY!" You know? *(Pause.)* Nope. Guess not. Anyway, This is the – *(SNEEZE!)* Yih. Yuck. OK. I get off track. The point is you're fired. You're fucking fired. Please don't protest. As I said, I'm a softie and if you sit there and cry like you do on the celery dip and egg bagels (yeah, I notice that, Babs) well then I'm just gonna cave and let you stay, but don't you DARE try that just because I tipped my hand and gave you access to my secret thoughts. You're fucking fired. Period.

(THUMP THUMP THUMP)

Wouldja...**HEY! HEY HOMBRES. SHUT THE DICK UP!** You don't sell like you used to. You're

like a gangrenous extra baby foot on the body of the Network so you're fired, Babs. You're frickin' canned. I have Trish, I have Angela, I have Chris, I have Bonnie-Kathleen and they're all in your age bracket (fifty to dead) but they do twice the sales. Some three times. I put Chris on the screen and people basically open a tab. "What's he selling? Wheelchairs? I don't need a fuckin wheelchair but someday I might and boy is he enchanting. Sign me up. What's that he's got there? What's that? A salad spinner that also washes your dog? I'll take a billion." Do you know how many acoustic guitars he sold today? You won't be able to open your car window without hearing someone screwing up *Blackbird*. (SNEEZE!) **DAMMIT. I'M GONNA THROW A FUCKING METAL STAPLER AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT STRAIGHT AT YOUR FUCKING HEADS IF YOU KEEP (SNEEZE!) IF (SNEEZE, SNEEZE!)**

(*Long pause.*)

If I were driving a car I'd be crumpled across a tree by now. I hate not being in control of my body. Whoever says sneezing is like an orgasm is a total fucking moron. Sneezing makes me feel like a crazy leprechaun. Bad example. The point, Babs, is that – oh dammit. Take a week. If you get your numbers up, you can stay. I want to fire Bonnie Kathleen anyway. Her voice gives me seizures. (SNEEZE!) **DAMMIT!**

SCENE 5

*(Let's talk about **clothing**. Here's what RAYMOND is wearing: A plaid shirt, a floppy brimmed hat, dark blue jeans, and big rubber boots. Around his neck is a birdcall and a digital camera. He looks kinda clownish, but mostly adorable. Here's what BABS is wearing: A khaki shirt, khaki short-pants outfit with a canvas belt. She looks like she's about to go on safari. BABS – you look radiant! Where'd you get those things on such short notice? Were they on sale? Here's what they both have: binoculars. They peer through them out at us. We're not birds, RAYMOND and BABS! You shouldn't be in a theater. That's a terrible place to birdwatch. The only thing you're likely to see is a bat or a play.)*

RAYMOND: What do you notice? Right away.

BABS: That it's flying backwards?

RAYMOND: Yes! Hummingbirds are the only birds that can fly backwards!

BABS: That's so.

RAYMOND: Cool?!!

BABS: Yes.

RAYMOND: Fly, little buddy. Lap up the sugary nectar and nibble a baby bee or two. You're special. Dive through the cold morning air and skate on the breeze. Show us what you can do, little bird. Find the honeysuckle, find the jewelweed, find the wild, lavender bergamot with petals like fists clawing their way to the sky to shake your beak and make a new friend. You're special, little bird. You can do what can't be done by anybody else.

BABS: I wish I could talk like you.

RAYMOND: Now mark this down.

(BABS takes out a tablet and pencil. As she writes, she turns to RAYMOND and stares longingly at his face.)

Ruby-Throated Hummingbird. Male. Young or undersized, maybe six months to nine? Standard green -bronze back and lily-white belly. Did you get all that?

BABS: Yes. I. Yes.

(RAYMOND looks through his binoculars.)

So... what's the rarest bird you've ever seen?

RAYMOND: When I was a boy I used to go Dodo *searching*. I saw a stuffed mock-up of a Dodo in the museum and read that it was extinct. I somehow convinced myself that I was capable of finding one. If anyone could find the last Dodo bird, it was going to be me. I don't know why. I think I was bored and a little stupid. (*Lowers binoculars. Really thinks.*) But the rarest bird that was still alive? Huh. Lemme see. Um. Might have been the – oh! You know. I know exactly. I was in Colombia, I had just graduated, and it was my first trip anywhere out of the country by myself. I'd just finished a hike along the great rushing Magdalena River, Rio Magdalena they called it, after Jesus's mom, when suddenly, in the morning sunlight, a morning not too dissimilar from this one, I look to a wax palm, and I see her.

BABS: Who!

RAYMOND: Forty-Three Mind-Blowing Centimeters. Greenapple body, black eyeglasses, feathers like fingerprints. and, most importantly, the banana yellow sides. Woosh. Woosh.

BABS: What was it!

RAYMOND: The Yellow-Eared Parrot!

BABS: Wow!

RAYMOND: (*He's in his own mind. Barely aware of BABS.*) I saw her. But she didn't see me. I quickly fumbled for my camera. I check the shutter speed. I set the aperture. Everything looks perfect. And just as I'm about to push that round button flush, it turns to me and cocks its head, giving me a perfect full-frontal shot. I snap. It pauses. I snap again. It still pauses. I snap again. And it flies away.

BABS: You got it!

RAYMOND: I got it. Three perfect pictures. I had it.

BABS: You had it? What happened?

RAYMOND: I forgot the camera was in my carry-on and it went through the X-Ray machine and got wiped. That's why I only use these now. (*Holds up digital camera.*)

BABS: Digital. You know, we just sold a couple thousand of that *exact* camera two weeks ago.

RAYMOND: It's a good camera.

BABS: Yeah, I like it.

RAYMOND: Man. The yellow-eared parrot. At the time, there were only eighty or so alive. Since then, the conservationists have got the number up to maybe six-hundred, so it's easier to find them. I mean, it's still really hard. Six-hundred is pretty much extinct, but it's no *eighty*. Of course I'm happy the number is on the rise. It's not like I *want* them to remain at eighty birds or less so that my experience was more special. I'm happy they're recovering. Of course I'm happy.

BABS: I have to go to work now.

RAYMOND: I hope I didn't bore you. My mother warns me not to talk about birds all day.

BABS: I loved hearing about them, Raymond. I really did. And seeing them!

RAYMOND: If you were a bird, you'd be a cuckoo.

BABS: I—

RAYMOND: That's not a bad thing. That's not to say "cuckoo" like crazy. You're not crazy. I mean that you're a little mysterious. I'm excellent at deciding which people would be which birds. It's my talent. My special and unique talent. You have strong legs, too. I noticed. Just like the cuckoo. A trim, strong, wonderful bird. A trim, strong, wonderful woman.

BABS: I'm a cuckoo.

RAYMOND: You're a cuckoo. I forget where we parked.

BABS: Don't worry. We'll find it. *(They raise their binoculars and go off searching.)*

SAMPLE ONLY

SCENE 6

(*JOCELYN NOB is still a jerk. She impatiently taps her foot backstage.*)

JOCELYN: Here's something: Do you know how many people audition every year to work On-Air at Shop-More? Don't answer. Your answer will be wrong. Here is the right one: Five-hundred. Five hundred hopeful people, people that aren't actors and actresses but normal people, and by 'normal people,' I mean people just like all of you. Some of them better than you. These normal people call up their friends. Ask their husbands and wives. Knock on their neighbors' doors. "Hey, neighbor, would you mind taking a photo of me?" "But what do you need a photo of you for?" say the friends and husbands and wives and neighbors. The five-hundred hopeful people bashfully smile. They're proud. They're embarrassed. They're, well, **hopeful**. "I need a headshot." "A headshot! Are you going to be a movie star!" "Not exactly," say the five hundred. "I'm just, auditioning. To work On-Air for ShopMore. To be the ultimate salesperson. To assist millions of people in their quest to find the perfect vacuum cleaner and barbeque sauce and fleece-lined slacks. I want to help people. *I want to spend the rest of my life helping people.*" So these five-hundred drive the long drive to the Walmart or Target and print out ten identical but "different" versions of the head-

shot. And on that drive to the store, they're rehearsing, "Up Next We Have," "Buy Now, We've Only Eighty-Eight Left," "Look at this – beautiful stitching. It'll light up your life." Then, the five hundred drive the Photos the long trip back home and spread them out on the kitchen table. Hey friend. Hey neighbor. Hey husband. Hey frickin' wife. Get in here. Help Me **Pick**. Oh. You like that one? Are you serious? I prefer this one. This one says I'LL BUY IT. That one says GO BACK TO THE RIVERBOAT. Wait – how about *this* one? It's a compromise, husband. A little of your pick. A little of mine. I think we've done good work here today, neighbor. I feel a confidence laying eggs in my heart. My life will never be the same.

So here we are, all five hundred hopefuls, waking up at four in the morning and driving to our Warehouse Coliseum of Dreams. And we all stand in line. And we all size up the competition. Her? Are you fucking kidding me? For her to fit in the shot with the Product, they'll have to move the camera back twenty-five feet. Him? He's got a mole on his face the shape of a ceiling fan. Her? She's Muslim. So the line moves closer and closer to the front. And each one of the five-hundred's hearts increase in their beats per minute. Baboom baboom to a hummingbird's **BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM**. Have we made a mistake, we worry? Are we frauds? That pretty blonde from an hour earlier walked out of the room smiling

like she just ate the cat that ate the canary. And then, all of a sudden, we shit our pants: **IT'S TIME.**

*(CHRIS, a dashing blonde man with an oversized dashing smile walks across the stage. CHRIS doesn't waste a lot of his time **thinking.**)*

Hi Chris.

CHRIS: *(Coming from working out on-set.)* Jocelyn. Lookin' good. Hey, have you tried the new Bow-Flex®? You should buy one. I'm gonna make you buy one.

(CHRIS exits. JOCELYN is complimented. She takes a moment to regain her bearings. Could it be that JOCELYN NOB is as lonely as BABS GILLESPIE?)

JOCELYN: Anyway. I welcome them into the little room. We got the video camera on the little tripod. **"Hi stranger,"** I say. **"I'm Jocelyn Nob. I'm A Big Fuckin' Deal."** And boy are they nice. They're the nicest people you ever met. They're the nicest people on the Planet Earth because I have the power to change their lives. I have the power to take their broken and huddled masses and make them Gods. I am their Guardian Angel. But only, *only* if I see **talent.** **"What did you bring with you today,"** I say, eyeing their amateur headshot that's not even good enough

for porn. “I brought with me a pair of sunglasses. I brought with me a Super Absorbent Mop. I brought with me a Slab of New Mexico Sun-Cured Beef Jerky,” they say, smiling too much. So then I smile too much. And I say my patented, “Wonderful.” **Wonderful!** Then I give them the only advice they’ll ever really need, aside from don’t pull your pants down on camera. I say, “Make me need it. Make me fall in love with a pair of plastic sunglasses. Make me want to take the mop, buy it dinner, and shove it up my asshole. Make me devour every fiber of jerky and lick my fingers till they bleed glory. I want to live. I want to live. **I NEED TO LIVE.** But do you know what they say? (*Imitating an Idiot.*) “Well look-ee-here what we gots a’comin’ up. Deese neat-o sunglasses. Ya put dem up on yer face and ya can stare inta da sun. Look-ee-here. I’m a fuckin’ moron.”

NEXT! So Mister One of Five Hundred gets in his car. And his heart rate finally relaxes to a standard American pace of a one-sixty-six. And he pulls out his fancy flippy phone that was supposed to be talking to him five short minutes from now about how HE GOT THE JOB. But it won’t. Then he accesses the phone book. And he scrolls down to Friend. He scrolls down to Neighbor. He scrolls down to Husband and Wife. He presses ‘Send.’ And he tells them how they sent him home. And when I say “they,” I of course mean “me.” I sent him home. But that’s showbiz, folks.

That's showbiz. It's a seven billion dollar a year industry I'm running. *(Silence. As though she just lit a cigarette. Which she would, if she weren't indoors.)* In the next hour we've got a quilt with a bunch of cats in top hats. You should buy one. My whole life all I ever heard was, "Jocelyn Nob, you are too nice."

(BABS GILLESPIE runs on. She's still in her khaki's. She's flustered. She's late.)

BABS: I am so, so sorry.

JOCELYN: I gave you a second chance, Captain Kangaroo.

BABS: We got lost.

JOCELYN: Yeah, I guess it's hard to find a place where you've worked for fifteen years. You're on in fifteen minutes. I almost had Handsome Chris cover for you. Since you've clearly forgotten how to be a professional, a piece of advice: Don't pull your pants down on camera. *Dick.*

(JOCELYN exits. BABS looks to her binoculars and smiles, remembering her amazing day. Blackout.)

SCENE 7

(Now what? Well, BABS and RAYMOND are sitting on a love seat. Are they in love, or should it just be called a 'seat'? Let's see...)

RAYMOND: Are you sure you want one?

BABS: Of course. They seem really...useful.

RAYMOND: I don't feel right about it.

BABS: No, please. I want one. I've been looking for a good one, actually. I swear.

RAYMOND: *(Lifting a large cardboard box onto his lap. A label reads: MAGIPEEL.)* I don't want him ending up on the street, you know?

BABS: Please. You don't need to justify it –

RAYMOND: And what with his broken legs – you should have seen him. This little white kid shows up at my door with this big box, bigger than *he* is. “Sir.” He says. “Mister. My name is Max. I am raising money for my basketball team. We need new equipment.” What equipment? Basketballs? I didn't say that, but that's what I thought. *Anyway.* He goes, “Would you want to buy one of these vegetable peelers.” Then he

takes out a tomato. A **TOMATO**. The poor kid brought not a carrot, not an apple, not a normal-peeling-fruit-or-vegetable, but instead a *tomato* and he starts to peel it right in front of me. I've got tomato shavings all over the front steps. He's really going at it. (*Takes a sip of wine.*) And this is extraordinarily difficult for Max because he's on crutches. So he peels then sorta tips over. Rights himself. Peels. Tips over. Rights himself. Peels. Tips over. And so on. His Mom or Dad or Guardian or whoever is nowhere – I don't even know how he carried the dang box all the way there. So I'm standing and watching this show and he peels the **WHOLE FRIGGIN TOMATO** and plops it down in my hand. Have you ever held a peeled tomato? Don't. So what could I do? I tell the kid: "Go home, leave me the box, and come back in a week. I'll sell them for you." So. Now I gotta sell one-hundred MagiPeels. (*Pulls one out of the box.*) It's actually pretty nice. Rubberized, textured handle. Solid metal body. Sharp steel twin blades. I made homefries this morning and the skins just **FLEW** off the taters. The inside of my sink looked like a piece of modern art.

BABS: I want to buy them. All of them. (*Walks off.*)

BABS (*OFF*): They make good gifts. I'll give them to people at work for Christmas.

RAYMOND: It's March 9th.

BABS (*OFF*): So I'll get my shopping out of the way.

(*Reenters holding checkbook*)

BABS: OK. How much are they?

RAYMOND: They're five dollars but I'm not letting you—

BABS: (*Scribbling and grinning widely.*) Here. You. Go.
Five Hundred Dollars. Δ Looks like Little Max is going
to be playing some basketball, huh?

RAYMOND: You have one hundred friends you can give
those to?

BABS: (*Taking box, sitting down, putting box on her lap.*)
Now think, Raymond. I only need ninety-nine. One's for
me.

BABS: (*The box is covering her face.*) I feel very good
about this purchase.

RAYMOND: You should know. You're the queen of sell-
ing. Ha. How about that. I just sold something to the
queen of selling. I'd think you'd be, like, impenetrable to
a sales pitch.

(*BABS puts down the box.*)

END OF SAMPLE.